

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 PC-01 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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TRSE-00 /076 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7704
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAGUA 4176

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, OAS, VE, NU
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH SOMOZA: 5TH SEPTEMBER

REF: STATE 224978

SUMMARY. CONCERNED OVER THE UPCOMING OAS MEETING CONVOKED AT VENEZUELAN REQUEST, SOMOZA REQUESTED A MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR. IN DISCUSSING THE OAS MEETING AND THE SITUATION IN NICARAGUA, SOMOZA STATED UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT THE GON WOULD NEITHER REQUEST NOR TOLERATE OAS INTERVENTION. PREDICTING A BLOOD-BATH AND BREAKDOWN OF THE OAS SHOULD SUCH AN INTERVENTION BE ATTEMPTED, SOMOZA AGAIN ASKED FOR COMPLETE USG SUPPORT OF HIS GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. AT SOMOZA'S REQUEST, AMBASSADOR MET WITH HIM FOR SLIGHTLY OVER ONE HOUR ON 5 SEPTEMBER EVENING. SOMOZA ASKED AMBASSADOR
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TO CLARIFY USG POSITION (EARLIER PRESENTED TO DEPUTY FORMIN BODAN) WITH RESPECT TO THE GOV INITIATIVE. AMBASSADOR TOLD SOMOZA THAT A CABLE HAD JUST ARRIVED FROM WASHINGTON AND EXPLAINED CONTENTS OF REFTEL --NOTING THAT USG DID NOT INTERPRET OAS CONVOCATION AS ONE INVOLVING RIO TREATY'S "THREAT TO PEACE" PROVISIONS, BUT, RATHER, ARTICLE 59 OF OAS CHARTER, AND THAT USG BELIEVES ARTICLE 59 APPLICABLE BECAUSE NICARAGUAN SITUATION

IS A "MATTER OF COMMON CONCERN." THE USG, HE CONTINUED, DOES NOT WISH TO PREJUDGE THE OUTCOME OF DEBATE, BUT FEELS THE OAS SHOULD FOCUS ATTENTION ON THE MATTER.

2. SOMOZA SAID THAT AMBASSADOR'S PRESENTATION APPEARED REASONABLE, BUT THE USG WAS BEING "DUPED" BY VENEZUELA. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE PROBLEM WAS THAT THE USG WAS BACKING NOT A COUNCIL MEETING BUT ONE OF THE CONSULTING BODY (ORGANO DE CONSULTA) AND THAT THE CONSULTING BODY IS ALL POWERFUL. SOMOZA SAID HE WOULD NOT BE CONCERNED IF IT WERE TO BE ONLY A COUNCIL MEETING, BUT THAT BY TAKING THIS "EXTRAORDINARY STEP," WE WERE OPENING THE DOOR TO INTERVENTION WHICH COULD BREAK UP THE OAS BECAUSE THE GON WILL PERMIT NO INTERVENTION HERE. FURTHERMORE, SOMOZA WANTED THE AMBASSADOR TO UNDERSTAND THAT OAS INTERVENTION HAD ALWAYS BEEN IN THE MINDS OF THE OPPOSITION. AGUERO (NOTE: FERNANDO AGUERO IS LEADER OF A FACTION OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY AND, AT THE TIME CITED, WAS THE POPULAR LEADER OF A MORE UNIFIED PCN PARTY.) CREATED A MAJOR DISTURBANCE IN 1967--WHEN THE DOMINICAN INTERVENTION WAS STILL RECENT--HOPING FOR SIMILAR OAS INTERVENTION. WHILE THE OAS DISCUSSES, SOMOZA CONTINUED, THE OPPOSITION WILL BE INCITED TO VIOLENCE WITH THE HOPE THAT "IN THE FACE OF VIOLENCE AND, EVEN, IRONICALLY SO, A COMMUNIST THREAT, THE OAS WILL INTERVENE AND OUST ME." THUS, VENEZUELA AND THE U.S. WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR BLOODSHED HERE.

3. CLEARLY, SAID SOMOZA, THE PRESIDENT OF THE OAS COUNCIL (AM-CONFIDENTIAL

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BASSADOR MCGEE) WOULD BE VOTING IN FAVOR OF INTERVENTION AND, IN THE LIGHT OF THIS, HE (SOMOZA) WILL HAVE TO "RECONSIDER THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USG. YOU MUST UNDERSTAND, MR. AMBASSADOR, THAT THIS MEETING IS, SIMPLY, AS IF A GROUP OF YOUR ENEMIES WERE TO BE SITTING AROUND WAITING FOR A RIOT TO OCCUR IN NEW YORK. CLEARLY, YOU WOULDN'T LIKE THAT. AND THE FACT THAT THE POTENTIAL RIOTERS KNEW THAT THEY HAD ALL THAT INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT WOULD FURTHER INCITE THEM. AMBASSADOR, I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT, DURING THE PROCESS OF CONSULTATION, THERE IS GOING TO BE A BLOODBATH HERE. ALREADY, THE U.S. HAS ENCOURAGED VIOLENCE HERE. BECAUSE OF YOUR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY, A BUNCH OF INBECILES HAVE THOUGHT THAT YOU ARE GOING TO OVERTHROW ME. DO NOT CONTRIBUTE MORE TO THE TRAGEDY OF THIS COUNTRY."

4. SOMOZA WENT ON TO ASK HOW, WITH THE INTERNATIONAL PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN AGAINST HIM, COULD HE MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER? "CLEARLY, I COULD STAGE AN AUTO-COUP AND LEAVE THE COUNTRY, BUT I CANNOT LEAVE THE COUNTRY IN CHAOS." AFTER THE NATIONAL PALACE INCIDENT, HE CONTINUED, IT BECAME APPARENT TO THE NATIONAL GUARD (GN) THAT THE COMMUNISTS WERE THE ONLY WELL-ORGANIZED OPPOSITION FORCE. "I HAVE JUST MET WITH THE GN AND IT WILL NOT PERMIT ITSELF TO BE DEFEATED BY THE COMMUNISTS AS ITS SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON THIS,

"SOMOZA SAID.

5. AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT SOMOZA WAS INTERPRETING EVENTS
PESSIMISTICALLY. TO BEGIN WITH, SOMOZA WOULD PROBABLY HAVE SOME
SUPPORT IN OAS. NEXT, THE OAS MEETING WOULD BE AN OPPORTUNITY
TO DISCUSS THESE PROBLEMS WHICH, AS SOMOZA WAS AWARE, INVOLVED
MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE ACROSS INTERNATIONAL BORDERS AND THE THREAT
OF A COMMUNIST TAKEOVER--BOTH MATTERS WHICH SHOULD BE DISCUSSED.
"NICARAGUA COULD, IN FACT," SAID AMBASSADOR, "PARTICIPATE
IN THIS DEBATE, HELP CLARIFY ISSUES AND PROBLEMS, AND PROPOSES
SOLUTIONS."

6. SOMOZA SAID THAT SUCH A VIEW WOULD HAVE BEEN ACCEPTABLE
"IF THE US WOULD HAVE PRIVATELY TOLD US THAT YOU WANTED THESE
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PROBLEMS, WHICH INDEED EXIST, DISCUSSED, WE WOULD
AGREE AND OPEN DISCUSSION OF THESE MATTERS. BUT, CARLOS ANDRES
NEVER TOLD ME THAT HE WANTED TO DISCUSS OBJECTIVELY AND BROADLY
THE NICARAGUAN PROBLEM, NOR DID CONSALVI (VENEZUELAN FORMIN) TELL
QUINTANA IN ROME THAT WE SHOULD SEEK AN OAS MEETING TO RESOLVE
THESE PROBLEMS.Z

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 PC-01 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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O R 062045Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7705
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

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7. AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED HIS VIEW THAT THERE EXISTED FOUR HYPOTHETICAL OPTIONS FOR USG POLICY. FIRST, SHORE UP THE SOMOZA REGIME. THIS APPROACH, HOWEVER, WAS IMPROPER BECAUSE NO FOREIGN GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR A LOCAL POLITICAL SITUATION. FURTHER, EXISTING DISTRUST OF SOMOZA'S INTENT TO LEAVE POWER INHIBITED THIS TYPE POLITICAL ACTION. SOMOZA PROTESTED, NOTING THAT THE PACT LEADING TO THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION WAS NEGOTIATED BY AMBASSADOR SHELTON AND HE (SOMOZA) HAD MADE MANY CONCESSIONS TO CONSERVATIVES TO PLEASE SHELTON. HE HAD HONORED THOSE CONCESSIONS AND WAS A MAN OF HIS WORD. CONTINUING WITH THE SECOND OPTION, THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT THE USG COULD WITHDRAW, IMPLYING TOTAL TERMINATION OF PROGRAMS AND MINIMUM PROFILE. THIS APPROACH WAS UNPOPULAR AMONG ACTIVISTS OF DIFFERENT PERSUASION WHO DO NOT WISH TO WASH THEIR HANDS OF NICARAGUS. THIRD, SOMOZA COULD BE OVERTHROWN. HOWEVER, THERE WERE SERIOUS MORAL AND POLITICAL RESERVATIONS TO THIS COURSE OF ACTION. FOURTH, MEDIATION. WHY, AMBASSADOR QUERIED, WOULD SOMOZA OPPOSE AN OAS MEDIATION
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NOT PHYSIVALLY OCCUPYING THE COUNTRY, BUT, FOR INSTANCE, IT CONSISTED OF SENDING PEOPLE TO GUARANTEE ELECTIONS? BOTH SIDES WOULD COMPROMISE, AMBASSADOR SAID. SOMOZA DISMISSED THIS AS IMPOSSIBLE, SAYING, "LATINS DON'T KNOW HOW TO COMPROMISE AND DON'T UNDERSTAND FREE ELECTIONS."

8. SOMOZA THEN TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT THE UPI STORY ABOUT RAYMOND MOLINA WAS "ABUSIVE." (NOTE: UPI REPORTED THAT MOLINA, A CUBAN-AMERICAN CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH SOMOZA, HAD REPRESENTED HIMSELF AS A GON SPOKESMAN AND LABELED PATRICA DERIAN, ROBERT PASTOR, AND MARK SCHNEIDER AS MARXISTS. END NOTE). SOMOZA DENIED HE WAS A SPOKESMAN. HE WANTED AMBASSADOR TO FORMALLY CLARIFY THIS WITH WASHINGTON. ONE THING IS SOMOZA'S PRIVATE, DIPLOMATIC CRITICISM, BUT MOLINA'S REMARKS WERE "RIDICULOUS." AMBASSADOR SAID HE WOULD SO REPORT TO WASHINGTON.

9. SOMOZA THEN SHOWED AMBASSADOR A "SECRET" DOCUMENT REPORTING ON CONTACTS BETWEEN PROMINENT FSLN MEMBERS, SUCH AS "ZERO," AND THE COSTA RICAN CONSUL IN VENEZUELA AND THE TRAINING OF FSLN CADRES IN CHIRIQUI, PANAMA BY CUBANS. SOMOZA REITERATED THAT THE USG WOULD GAIN NOTHING BUT VIOLENCE HERE AND THAT HE WAS A VERY PATIENT MAN (SERENO), BUT THAT HE WAS MOBILIZING HIS TROOPS TOMORROW AND ANYONE WHO STARTED SHOOTING WAS GOING TO BE SHOT BY THE GN IN SELF-DEFENSE. HE WANTED AMBASSADOR TO KNOW THAT HE WAS "CURRENT" (AL DIA) WITH THE OAS, HAVING INVITED THE IAHRG TO VISIT, BUT HE WILL NOT ACCEPT A UNILATERAL OAS INTERVENTION. THE GON WILL NOT ASK THE OAS TO COME HERE AND, WITH SUCH OPPOSITION, THE

OAS COULD BREAKDOWN. SOMOZA OPINED THAT THE NEXT FEW DAYS HERE WOULD BE CRUCIAL AND AMB MUST BE VERY CAREFUL AS HIS LIFE MIGHT BE IN DANGER. THE FSLN MIGHT RETURN ANYTIME AND ALL THEY WANTED WAS TO "SCREW" THE US.

10. SOMOZA THEN READ, FROM A BOOK, INCIDENTS OCCURRING IN VENEZUELA
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DURING THE EARLY 1960'S CONCERNING THE MARXIST REBELLION VS. BETANCOURT: STATE OF SIEGE, GOV OCCUPATION OF THE UNIVERSITY; THE SLOGAN "KILL A POLICEMAN A DAY", PLOTS TO ASSASSINATEO BETANCOURT; LIFTING OF PARLIAMENTARY IMMUNITY IN SOME CASES; MARXIST BOYCOTT OF THE 1963 ELECTIONS... "ALL THIS IS HAPPENING HERE, MR. AMBASSADOR. YOU DIDN'T CALL BETANCOURT, A DICTATOR. THE USG HELPED VENEZUELA. THE USG MUST NOW BACK SOMOZA. TO THE HILT," SOMOZA SAID.

11. SOMOZA REITERATED THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN NICARAGUA AND THE US. HE HAD TRIED, HE SAID, BY ALL MEANS TO MAKE PEACE WITH VENEZUELA, BUT THAT "OLD HATRED BETWEEN BETANCOURT AND MY FATHER" BLOCKED ANY UNDERSTANDING. CLOSING THE DISCUSSION, SOMOZA MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS. VENEZUELA SHOULD NOT ACT AS ISG PROXY. OAS ACTION WILL ENCOURAGE BLOODSHED HERE WITH REVOLUTIONAIRES HOPING FOR INTERVENTION. THE PRECENT OF OAS INTERVENTION IS DANGEROUS. SINCE AGUERO IN 1967, THE OPPOSITION HAS BEEN TRYING TO USE THE OAS. MANGUA IS ON THE VERGE OF MAJOR BLOODSHED. THE GON WILL NEVER AS THE OAS TO INTERVENE. ONE THING IS TO DISCUSS NICARAGUA IN COUNCIL, THE CONSULTING BODY WAS QUITE DIFFERENT. THE USG MUST HELP HIM TO DEFUSE THE TIME BOMB THAT NICARAGUA IS TODAY.

12. COMMENT: SOMOZA CONTINUES TO VOCALIZE OPPOSITION TO THIRD PARTY MEDIATION. HE APPEARS TO BE PREPARED TO RESORT TO FORCE TO NEUTRALIZE THE OPPOSITION. THE REMAINS UNWILLING TO INITIATE DRAMATIC REFORMS THAT MIGHT STRENGTHEN THE CENTER OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM.
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